
CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 2002, the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 121 deaths of persons 19 years old or younger, which represented 7% (121/1,683) of the deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 23% (31/121) were of natural manner, 21% (26/121) were accidents, 14% (17/121) were homicides, 28% (34/121) were traffic related, and 7% (9/121) were suicides. There was one (1) death of a child/youth classified as an undetermined manner where the investigation was inconclusive as to whether the death was intentional or not. In addition to investigating childhood deaths, the King County Medical Examiner participates in Child Death Review, a process which discusses these deaths in detail and formulates prevention strategies.

Of the 31 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 71% (22/31) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 22 infants who died of natural causes, 16 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

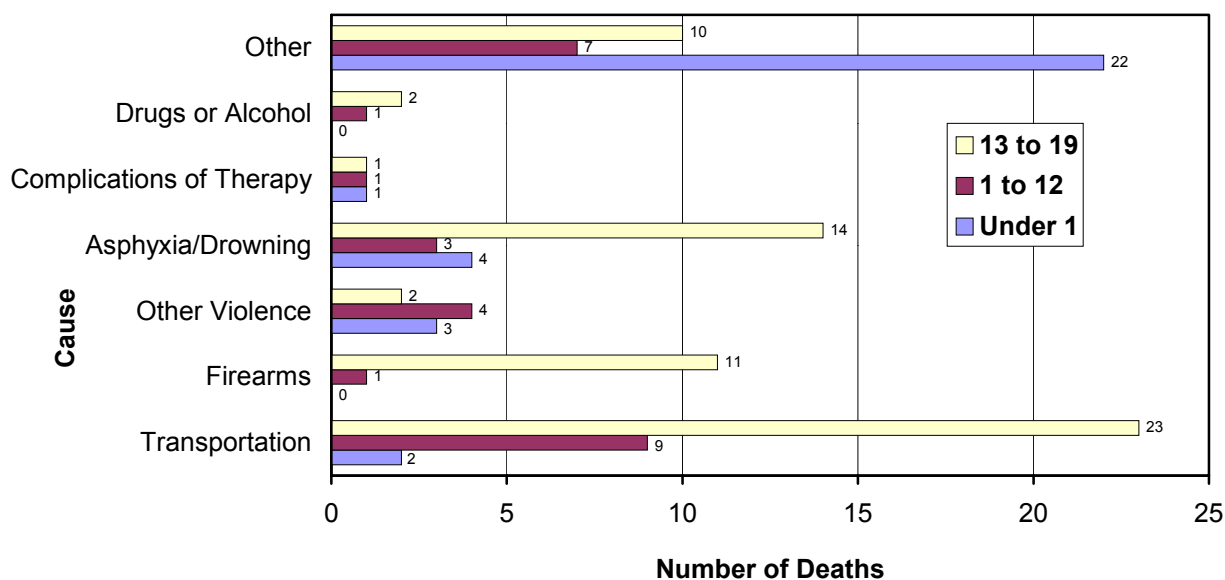
There were 26 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Another 34 children and youths died in traffic related accidents.

There were 17 homicides among children and youth. Of these 17 homicide victims, 10 were teenagers, 13 through 19 years of age, and 7 were children under 12 years. Fifty-nine percent (10/17) of the children and youth homicide victims died by firearms.

There were 9 youth suicides, between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Males comprised 89% (8/9) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, two (2) were by firearms, six (6) by hanging and one (1) by jumping from heights.

Thirty-four (34) children and youth 19 years and under died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 23 (68%) were teenagers. There were 10 motor vehicle driver deaths and 7 motor vehicle passenger deaths. No teenager died as the result of a bicycle accident in 2002. Four (4) teenagers died as pedestrians. There were two motorcycle caused teenage deaths in 2002. Of the 27 children and youths who died in motor vehicles, 41% (11/27) were known to be restrained and 59% (16/27) were unknown if they were using seatbelts or any other restraint device.

The following tables list the causes of death among children and youth for all manners in three age groups: under 1 year, 1-12 years and 13-19 years.

Graph 11-1 Non-Natural Causes of Death in Children and Youth ¹**Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Miscellaneous	4	3	0	2	0	17		26
<i>Asphyxia</i>	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	
<i>Automobile Passenger</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
<i>Aspiration</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Drugs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fire/Burns</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>SIDS</i>	0	0	0	0	0	16	16	
Natural Disease - Others	0	0	0	0	1	5		6
Total	4	3	0	2	1	22		32

¹ Natural deaths excluded.

Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Transportation related	0	0	0	5	0	0		5
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Physical Trauma	2	1	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Fire/Burns</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Incised Wound</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Struck by Train</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia	5	0	0	0	0	0		5
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drowning</i>	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Positional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	5	0	0	0	1	0		6
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Fall, Ground Level</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fire/Explosion</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Natural	0	0	0	0	0	9		9
Undetermined/Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	0		1
Total	12	1	0	5	2	9		29

Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Transportation related	0	0	0	23	0	0		23
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motor vehicle driver</i>	0	0	0	11	0	0	11	
<i>Motor vehicle occupant</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
Physical Trauma	1	10	2	0	0	0		13
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Crushing</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	9	2	0	0	0	11	
<i>Incised Wound/Stabbing</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Struck by Train/Object</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs or alcohol exposure	2	0	0	0	0	0		2
Asphyxia	7	0	6	0	1	0		14
<i>Drowning</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	6	0	1	0	7	
<i>Smothering</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Miscellaneous	4	0	1	0	1	0		6
<i>Complication of Therapy</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Falls</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Jumping</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	5		5
Total	14	10	9	23	2	5		63